

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b): Certain cases of irregularities in the procurement/purchase of some items of fuel, dry rations and frozen meat to troops have come to light. These cases have been duly investigated by Courts of Inquiry.

(c) In the case pertaining to purchase of fuel, disciplinary action had already been initiated against the seven indicted service personnel. However, in two other cases Courts of Inquiry have been concluded but some of the indicted officers have approached civil courts challenging the recommendations of the Court of Inquiry. These cases are presently *sub-judice*.

(d) The Ministry has promulgated Defence Procurement Manual, 2006 for streamlining the procurement and purchase processes..

Exodus of pilots from Air Force

36. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of posts in the Air Force, particularly the posts of pilots, are lying vacant,

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether a large number of pilots are leaving their job on one pretext or the other;

(d) if so, the details thereof, and

(e) what measures are proposed to be taken to retain and attract young men into the force?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) Against an authorized strength of 3278 pilots in the Indian Air Force (IAF), 3068 pilots are in position. The vacancy of 210 pilots cannot be termed large as it does not affect operational requirements.

(c) and (d) There is no large departure of pilots from the Air Force. The details of the numbers of IAF pilots who have sought premature retirement during the last four years is as follows.

Year	Proceeded on Premature Retirement
2003	72
2004	116
2005	58
2006	19
(Upto 31.10.2006)	

A majority of the pilots released from the service have already completed their useful tenure as pilots. These exists do not affect the operational status of the squadrons.

(e) The improvement in the job profile of the IAF pilots is a continuous process keeping in view the job specific requirements and operational necessity.

Increase in suicide cases in defence forces

37. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI:
 SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY:
 SHRI K.E. ISMAIL:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the cases of suicide/killing self in the defence forces are on the increase these days;

(b) if so, the number of such cases which took place during the last one year, rank-wise;

(c) what are the reasons for such suicides/self-killing of the jawans/officers of the armed forces; and

(d) what steps Government propose to take to stop such an action amongst the forces?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) From 1st January, 2006 to 14th November, 2006 the number of suicides in the Armed Forces were 128 which include 5 Officers, 5 Junior Commissioned Officers (JCOs) and 118 Other Ranks (ORs).